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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Note: The editor is not responsible for opinions expressed in this department. All communications must be accompanied by the name and address of the writer.

A PROTEST

Dear Editor: Our attention has been drawn to an article headed "English Nursing Politics" published in the *AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING* for February. As this article is evidently written under a misapprehension of the situation and as it is based upon a biased account given in the *British Journal of Nursing* of the present condition of the Nursing World in England, may we be allowed to give a short account of the existing state of affairs in the nursing world.

The article in question says that an "odious element which has been the affliction of British nurses for thirty years, is still busy trying to enslave them in a web wherein the College of Nursing, state registration, and public alms are woven with the intent to keep them professionally helpless."

It seems only right that American nurses should hear the other side of the question, and be told that many thousand English trained nurses at the present moment are looking to the College of Nursing to regularize and consolidate their status, and to raise the standard for those of their sisters who are now going through their training. The College came into existence as a result of the great lack of uniformity and (in many cases) efficiency in the training of nurses which the present war revealed. Its avowed objects are to obtain (1) State registration for the trained nurses; (2) the protection of the interests of trained nurses; (3) the raising of the standard of training; (4) the establishment of a uniform curriculum of training and one portal examination; (5) the establishment of lectureships and scholarships.

These are the objects which the promoters of the College have set themselves to attain. Eventually, the College will undoubtedly be the great educational authority in all matters connected with the training of nurses and there is no doubt that the college will also have very material influence in securing an increase in the pay of nurses and an improvement in the general conditions under which they serve.

The constitution of the College of Nursing is spoken of in the article as being "tyrannical." How far this statement is removed from the truth is shown by the fact that the Council consists at present of: twenty-three trained nurses (many of them matrons of the chief training schools); one woman doctor; nine doctors; and only three laymen. Surely where the question of the training of nurses is involved those who are actually engaged in this work are the best qualified to speak. Moreover, in May next the Council of the College becomes elective and one-third of the members of the existing Council will vacate their seats and will be replaced by representatives elected by the nurses themselves who are members of the College. By May, 1920, the whole Council will thus have been placed upon a democratic basis, and if there are doctors and laymen still upon it, they will be there by the vote of the nurses.

Exception is being taken to the appeal made by the British Women's Hospital Committee for funds to start the College of Nursing, and also for a Tribute Fund for sick and disabled nurses. It is obvious that large sums of money are required for the foundation of the College on adequate lines. Nurses themselves are not in a position to contribute these sums, and the public will not give unless asked. The majority of nurses would probably prefer that someone other than themselves should press their claims to recognition. It seems

somewhat ungrateful, therefore, to say that "trained nurses object to alms," when the British Women's Hospital Committee have said publicly that there is no thought of charity in the subscription, but that it is the payment of the debt owed by the country to those who are nursing England's sailors, soldiers and civilians.

We hope that what we have written above will be sufficient to show how misleading was the information upon which the article in the AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING was based. In fairness to the British nurses who are whole-heartedly supporting the College of Nursing, we venture to express the hope that you will find room in your next issue for the insertion of this article.

(Signed)

ALICIA DAY STILL,

Matron St. Thomas Hospital and Superintendent Nightingale Training School.

(Signed)

MAY HUGHES,

*Member of Council of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses, Late
General Superintendent Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses.*

(Miss Dock assures us that her criticism and use of the term "odious element" was not intended to apply to professional women, but rather to men and women of the reactionary public who have been the leaders in this movement.—Ed.)

ANOTHER PROTEST

Dear Editor: May I be permitted through the pages of the JOURNAL to enter a vigorous protest against the treatment accorded a guest invited to read a paper at one of the convention meetings at Cleveland. Miss Nutting's attitude toward Dr. Goldwater was an exhibition of discourtesy and tactlessness which it would be difficult to equal, and which should not be allowed to pass unnoticed. It is not necessary at the present time to discuss the pros and cons of the controversy, but we have indeed reached a difficult pass when our leaders cannot listen calmly and courteously to views which do not coincide with theirs. Dr. Goldwater has upheld the standards of the nursing profession in a sane and rational manner ever since we have had any standards to uphold; he has a national reputation for fairness and sound judgment and he had every right to expect and receive from the representatives of the nursing profession the consideration and respect for his views which they receive from the Federal authorities. Moreover, as a graduate of the Mt. Sinai Training School for Nurses, I deeply resent Miss Nutting's arraignment of the Mt. Sinai Hospital and its methods, which it should be needless for me to say are far in advance of the majority of the hospitals in the United States.

New York

JENNIE GREENTHAL.

X-RAY WORK FOR NURSES

Dear Editor: The technical part of X-ray work is comparatively easy and quickly learned. While it is dangerous in the hands of an inexperienced person, causing, perhaps, personal harm to the operator and the patient, damage to the machine and waste of expensive material, the knowledge is a great asset to the trained nurse. I began studying about six months ago and now I do practically all the technical part of the X-ray work for a forty-bed hospital and for several dentists, and I teach all the senior nurses in the training school the X-ray technic. We all realize the important part the X-ray plays in surgery today. If we, as nurses, are to give the help to suffering humanity that we would like, or if we are intelligently to assist the doctors with whom we work, we must have some knowledge of this wonderful machine. There are several